

THE ^{1608/4875} ^{Re Miller}
Dissenting Gentleman's
ANSWER

To the REVEREND

Mr. *WHITE*'s
THREE LETTERS;

IN WHICH

A SEPARATION from the Establish-
ment is fully justified ;

The Charge of SCHISM is refuted and retorted ;

AND THE

CHURCH of *England* and the CHURCH of
JESUS CHRIST, are impartially compared, and
found to be CONSTITUTIONS of a quite
DIFFERENT NATURE.

*We desire to hear thee — for as concerning THIS SECT,
we know that every where it is spoken against.*

Acts xxviii. 22.

THE SECOND EDITION.

L O N D O N :

Printed for R. HETT, at the *Bible and Crown* in
the *Poultry*. M.DCC.XLVI.

[Price Six-Pence.]

1608/48 75



THE
DISSENTING GENTLEMAN'S
ANSWER

To the REVEREND
Mr. WHITE's Three Letters, &c.

S I R,

A Debate of this kind I should not have *chose* in the present Situation of our publick Affairs: But as you have done me the Honour of publickly addressing to me *three* long Letters for my Conviction and Edification, Gratitude and good Manners *constrain* me to answer.

As *worldly* Considerations are very strong on your Side, I assure you, I have an Ear *always open* to any thing that can shew Conformity to be my Duty. *Dissenters* are not Men of so peculiar a Turn of Mind, as to love Suffering and Reproach, or to despise the Dignities, Preferments, and lucrative Posts, to the Amount of *Millions* a Year, which are shared amongst their Fellow-subjects, could they with a good Conscience partake of them, as they have a *natural Right* to do.

But, notwithstanding this Prejudice in Favour of your Argument, and all the Ingenuity

with which you set it off, I cannot say it has wrought in me the Conviction you seemed to hope. So far, Sir, from this, that the more carefully I examine the Grounds of my *Separation*, the more thoroughly I am convinced of its Lawfulness and Expedience; that 'tis a *Debt* I owe to GOD, to *Liberty*, to *Truth*, and an Act of Homage and Allegiance due to CHRIST, the *only* Law-giver and King in the Church.

I shall not enter upon the Enquiry, on which you largely expatiate, who are the *best Livers*, Churchmen or Dissenters? And amongst which the best Means for *holy living* are found? Let the World judge betwixt us. Would to GOD that both of us had greater Reason to boast!

The Controversy betwixt us, Sir, I apprehend may easily be brought to a *plain* and *short* Issue, if you will heartily join in it. It turns upon the *single Point* of the XXth Article of your Church, *viz. That THE CHURCH hath Power to decree Rites and Ceremonies, and Authority in Matters of Faith.* For if THE CHURCH hath *really* this Authority and Power, then all Objections of the Dissenters about Sponsors, the Cross in Baptism, kneeling at the Lord's-supper, and every other Thing, are impertinent and vain: *The Church* having this *Authority*, ought reverently to be obeyed. And, if instead of two or three Ceremonies, it had enjoined two or three score; and if to the *thirty-nine Articles* it had added an hundred besides, we ought meekly to have bowed down to her *spiritual Jurisdiction*,

Jurisdiction, and to have practised and believed as *the Church* had taught and enjoined.

But, if on the contrary, Sir, *the Church* hath really and in Truth, no *Power at all*, nor *Authority* of this kind; yea, if CHRIST, the great *Law-giver* and *King* of the Church, hath expressly commanded that NO POWER of this kind shall ever be *claimed*, or ever be *yielded*, by any of his Followers, then *your Church* is reprehensible and highly criminal before GOD, for usurping *this Power*: And then *the Dissenters* are justified, and will have Honour before GOD, for entering their Protest against such *Usurpation*; for asserting the Rights and Privileges of the Christian Church; and *standing fast in the Liberty wherewith CHRIST has made them free*.

Our *Separation* from the Establishment you are pleased to represent in very terrifying and black Colours, as a Sin of near the first Magnitude—" Our Ministers, you say, have Guilt
 " lying heavily upon them on Account of
 " their schismatical and uncatholick Proceed-
 " ings.—They are notoriously peccant (*i. e.* are
 " great Sinners) in throwing off the Authority
 " of those whom they ought to obey and sub-
 " mit themselves to.—Their Conduct is such
 " as you challenge all the Wit and Ingenuity
 " of the Nation ever to reconcile with *holy*
 " *Living*—You represent them as carnal, evil,
 " and deceitful Workers, disorderly Walkers,
 " whom GOD will, undoubtedly, for these
 " Things,

“ Things, bring into Judgment *; and *the*
 “ *Faithful*, far from being permitted to enter
 “ into any *pastoral Relation* to them, are not
 “ permitted to have any *Christian Communion*
 “ with them; no, not so much as any *intimate*
 “ unnecessary Acquaintance and Familiarity
 “ with them in common Life †;” with
 much more to the same Purpose.

You speak also “ of the *Lay-dissenter*, as
 “ having stained his Soul with Guilt ‡; and
 “ of the Doctrine on which our Separation
 “ is built, as being *false* and *dangerous* ||.
 “ This you wish me to lay to Heart, and seriously
 “ to consider.”

I have, according to your Wish, Sir, *lain*
it to Heart, and *seriously considered*. The Result
 of my Consideration I shall now freely
 give you; and in return heartily wish, that laying
 aside all Prejudice and *worldly Attachments*,
 you would impartially consider---What is the
 true Nature and Constitution of the *Christian*
Church; and what the Allegiance, which, as
 a Subject of JESUS CHRIST, you owe to HIM
 the *only* Law-giver and King in the Church;
 who will shortly call you to Account for your
 Conduct in this Respect.

To come then to the Point---THE CHURCH;
 you say, and solemnly subscribe it, *both Power*
to decree Rites, and Authority in Matters of
Faith. This is the grand Hinge upon which
 the whole Controversy turns. Now here, Sir,
 let me ask you,

FIRST,

* Letter I. Page 82, 83.

† Letter II. Page 8.

‡ Letter II. Page 26.

|| Letter III. Page 59.

FIRST, *What CHURCH* is it, to whom this Authority and Power is given? You will, doubtless, say, the *Church of England*; for the *Church of England* expressly claims and exercises this Power; and you *avow* and *defend* it in this Exercise and Claim: Yea, this is the *very Basis* on which its whole Frame and Hierarchy stand. It obliges all its Ministers to subscribe to *Articles of Faith*, which it hath *authoritatively* decreed; and to use in religious Worship *Ceremonies* and *Rites*, which it hath *authoritatively* enjoined.

But mind, Sir, I beseech you, the Consequences of this Claim. If the *Church of England* hath really this Authority and Power; hath not the *Church of France*---the *Church of Spain*---the *Church of Rome* the very same? Hath *England*, in this Matter, any Privilege from God, any spiritual Prerogative, any Charter from Heaven, which its *neighbour Countries* have not? You will not pretend it has. But if it has *no* Privilege nor Prerogative of this kind, then the *Church of France*, and the *Church of Rome* have also, you acknowledge, *POWER to decree Rites and Ceremonies in God's Worship*, and *AUTHORITY in Points of Faith*; consequently, all the Fopperies and Superstitions of the *Romish Church*, at least, which cannot be proved to be contrary to the Word of God, are to be reverently submitted to by all the Members of that Church, and cordially received.

But will not your claiming this Power for the *Church* absolutely overthrow the *Reformation* itself,

self, and subvert the *very Foundation* of the Church you seek to establish? For, till you can shew, why the *Church of England* is possessed of this Power, but not the *Church of Rome*; why a Body of acknowledged fallible Men in *Britain* have Authority to make and to enjoin Articles of Faith, but not a Body of pretended infallible Men at *Trent*; whence *ENGLAND* came thus spiritually-gifted, and endowed beyond all its *neighbour Kingdoms*--- your Separation from the *Church of Rome* is incapable of a just and solid Defence.

To this, perhaps, you will reply---But our *Church* hath expressly guarded against any such *Abuse* of the Power it claims, by adding in the *XXth Article*--- *Yet is it not lawful for the Church to ordain any Thing that is contrary to God's Word written; neither may it so expound one Place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another.* But, upon this, I intreat your Patience for these two Remarks:

1st, Whatever *Ceremony* or *Rite* then cannot be shewn to be *CONTRARY to GOD's Word*, your Church, yea, the *Church of Rome* hath, you acknowledge, full Authority to enjoin: Consequently, as *your Church*, by *Virtue* of this Authority, hath enjoined the *Cross in Baptism*, it hath full Power also to require you to *cross yourselves*, whenever you enter the Place of Worship, say your Prayers, look toward the East, touch the Bible, sit at Meat---It hath full Power to enjoin the Use of Salt and Spittle in *Baptism, Chrism, extreme Unction*, and an hundred

dred other Things, which are no more *contrary to God's Word* than the Cross in Baptism is.

As your Church now *consecrates Ground*, it has every whit as much *Power* to consecrate the *other Element*, and to make *holy Water*, as well as *holy Earth*; and to order it to be decently sprinkled upon its Members (*for all Things, you know, are to be done decently and in Order*) in Token that they shall keep themselves pure from Sin: It hath *Power* to consecrate *holy Knives* to cut the sacramental Bread; *holy Basins* and *Ewers* for the Priests to wash in before the Sacrament, *holy Vestments and Robes*, and a great Variety of *holy Utensils*, lighted *Tapers* for the Altar, &c. (all which, you know, Sir, was done by your admired Bishop *Laud*) knocking on the Breast, bowing towards the East, Prostration before the Altar. --- All these, I say, and innumerable other Ceremonies *your Church* claims *Authority* and *Power* to enjoin; for none of these can be shewn to be more *contrary to the Word of God*, or to be a whit more superstitious, ridiculous, or absurd, than the *crossing* at Baptism, or the *solemn Consecration* of Churches and their Yards. But,

2dly. The *Limitation* or *Guard*, which the Article seems to put upon *this Power* of the Church, is really of no Force, and amounts to nothing at all.

For tho' it says---That the Church *may not ordain any Thing* CONTRARY to *God's Word*,

nor so expound one Scripture as to be REPUGNANT to another : Yet of this Repugnance and Contrariety, the CHURCH alone, you will observe, and not every private Person, is allowed to be the proper Judge : For else the Article is absurd ; it actually overthrows itself ; and takes away, with one Hand, what it gives with the other. For, if every private Person hath Authority to judge of the Church's Decisions, and to reject them, if they appear to him repugnant to Scripture, then the Church's Authority in Points of Faith comes to just nothing at all. It is an Authority to decree, where none are bound to submit ; that is, an Authority over no Body, an Authority to do nothing. But such a senseless, unmeaning, impertinent Claim, can never be the Design and Import of this Article. It does claim therefore for the Church some real Authority to settle Points of Faith ; consequently, to Points thus authoritatively settled by it, private Christians, its Members, are reverently to submit, even tho' to their own Judgments they appear repugnant to the Word of God.

This, Sir, must be the real Meaning and Intent of the Article, notwithstanding the *restrictive Clause*. Accordingly, in Consequence of this Claim, your Church hath *authoritatively* decreed *thirty-nine* Articles of Faith ; and these it declares to have decreed *for the taking away Difference of Opinion, and to establish an Agreement in true Religion* *. The plain Language of

* Preface to XXXIX Articles.

of *Authority*. These Articles it obliges all its Ministers to subscribe; and our *Princes*, as Heads and Governors of the *Church*, have authoritatively forbid its Clergy to preach any Thing repugnant to them, and required them to frame their Sermons according to *the Plan* here prescribed. From all which it appears, that, notwithstanding the *pretended Limitation*, there is a *real Authority* claimed by the Church, that is to say, by its *Governors*, to settle Points of Faith. But if there be *such Authority* really vested in them, then the People are bound to *submit* to their Decisions, and have no Right of private Judgment to *examine* or *reject* them; for there cannot be *two* CONTRADICTORY *Rights*; a *Right* in Governors to prescribe, and a *Right* in Subjects to refuse. — But if the *Church of England* has really this Authority and Right, the *Church of Rome* had it before her; and, as the elder and *Mother-church*, ought to have been obeyed. The *Reformation*, therefore, as we are wont to call it, was a Rebellion against Superiors, a Disobedience to the Authority vested in *the Church*, and ought, as such, to be renounced by returning to the *Church of Rome*.

In this Manner, Sir, a *Romish Priest* will turn upon the *Church of England* its own dangerous Artillery; and by the meer Concessions of this XXth Article, thousands of Profelytes have, no doubt, been gained from you. Nor, with all your Ingenuity, would you find it easy to ward off the Force of such Arguing, should any of

your Parishioners be likely to be seduced. And this, perhaps, is the Reason why the numerous Converts these Priests are said to make, are gathered *all* from *your Church*; whereas, from amongst *the Dissenters*, you hardly ever hear of one gained. But,

SECONDLY. I want much to be enlightened as to THE PERSONS who are invested with *this Authority and Power*.

You say, it is *the Church*: But *Who*, I pray, are *the Church*, in whom this great *Power* is lodged? You will please to observe well, Sir, not the *Bishops and Clergy*, who are wont to speak of themselves as our *spiritual Pastors and Guides*, as being *over us in the Lord*, as *Stewards of the Mysteries*, &c. This *Power* to order the Manner of God's Worship, and to settle Articles of Faith, is *not* at all lodged in *them*, but entirely in the KING and PARLIAMENT of these Realms.

You need not be informed, Sir, that *all the Clergy* of this Kingdom, with *all the Bishops*, at their Head, have not the least *Authority* to enjoin one Ceremony or Rite of Worship; or to either *establish* or *annul* one Article of Faith. No, but *all* Power and Jurisdiction relating to these Matters is lodged chiefly in *Lay-hands*; 'tis solely in the KING and PARLIAMENT, and *the Clergy* are to act in all Things under *their* Direction and Controul. The KING and PARLIAMENT are in Truth the real *Fathers, Governors*, or *BISHOPS* of this Church: *These ONLY* have Power to make or to unmake Forms and Rites

Rites of Worship, and do *authoritatively* instruct and prescribe to *the Clergy* what they are to believe—in what Manner, and to whom the Sacraments are to be given—what Prayers they are to offer up—what Doctrines to preach—who are to be admitted to the *Episcopate* or *Priesthood*, and who to be refused—by what Ceremonies, and Prayers, and Exhortations they are to be set apart, and consecrated to their Office.—These, with every other Circumstance relating to Religion and the Worship of God, which is *authoritatively* prescribed or enjoined in *your Church*, you know, Sir, not the *Bishops* and *Clergy*, but the KING with *his Parliament* are the ONLY *Persons* who have *authoritatively* enjoined and prescribed them.

“The *Clergy* of the whole Land, in Convocation assembled, cannot so much as attempt any Canons or Constitutions without the King’s Licence. If the King and Clergy make a Canon, tho’ it binds the Clergy *in re ecclesiastica*, yet it does not bind Laymen*.”

Yea, so far, Sir, were the *Bishops* and *Clergy* from having any Hand in the first forming our pre-

* *Vide Examination of the Codex, &c. Page 114, 148.* “By the 25th of Hen. VIII. Cap. 19. it is a *Præmunire* for the Convocation to meet without the *King’s Writ*: And when they are met to do any thing without the *King’s Licence*: And then no Resolution of theirs to have the Force of a *Canon*, unless the *King* confirm it. Nor is it then valid, if it be contrariant or repugnant to the Laws, Statutes, and Customs of this Realm, or be to the Damage or Hurt of the *King’s Prerogative* royal—And of this the Courts of *Westminster-Hall* must judge. —*Hale*, in his *Analysis* (Page 12.) says, If ecclesiastical Laws are not confirmed by *Parliament*, the *King* may revoke and annul them at his Will and Pleasure.”—*Vide Notes on an Answer to the Examination of the Bishop of London’s Codex.*

present established Church, or in ordering its Rites and Articles of Faith, that it was done not only *without*, but in *actual Opposition* to them: "For in the 1st of Q. Eliz. the *Parliament alone* established the Queen's Supremacy and the Common-prayer-book, in spite of all Opposition from *the Bishops* in the House of Lords; and *the Convocation* then sitting, were so far from having any Hand in those Church-acts for Reformation, that they presented to the Parliament several Propositions in Behalf of the Tenets of *Papery*, directly contrary to the Proceedings of the Parliament.*" —

Hence then, Sir, I think you must be absolutely forced to own (what I know Gentlemen of your Robe don't care to hear) *viz.* That the *Church of England* is really a PARLIAMENTARY Church; that it is not properly an *Ally*, but a mere *Creature* of the State. It depends entirely upon the *Acts* and *Authority* of PARLIAMENT for its very Essence and Frame. The Qualifications of its Ministers, their Power to officiate, the Manner in which they are to administer the Sacraments, are all limited and prescribed by *Authority of Parliament*, and this *Authority*, which at first made, can *alone* alter and new-make it; can abolish, or add to its Articles or Rites, according to its Pleasure, even tho' the whole Body of *Bishops* and *Clergy* ever so much dislike, or protest earnestly against it.

It is a Point therefore *incontestible*, and absolutely out of Doubt, that THE CHURCH, your

Ar-

* *Vide* Priestcraft in Perfection, Pref. Pag. 4.

Article declares to have *this Authority* and *Power* here, is the KING and PARLIAMENT of these Realms; and it is *no other* than they. But,

THIRDLY. The grand Point which yet sticks, and which, without your Assistance, I shall never get over, is, how came the *civil Magistrate* by this Authority in the *Church of CHRIST*? Who gave *him* this Power to decree Rites in Christian Worship, which *Christ* never decreed; and to make articles of Faith which *Christ* never made? Neither *CHRIST*, nor *the Apostles*, ever gave him this Authority; whence then is it derived?

The *Subjection to higher Powers, and Obedience to Magistrates*, which the Scriptures enjoin *Christians*, relates *only* to *civil*, not at all to *religious* Matters: For this obvious Reason; that the *Magistrate* at that Time was every where *Pagan*. The Apostles therefore instead of paying, or exhorting Christians to pay, any Subjection to him in *religious Affairs*, strenuously exhorted them to renounce and disavow it—to come out from among them and be separate. They were every where, you know, Sir, *Dissenters* from the *established Church*.

CHRISTIANITY is so far from enjoining, that it actually forbids, Obedience to *civil Governors* in Things of a *religious* Nature. It commands us to call no Man upon Earth Father or Master *, *i. e.* to acknowledge no Authority or Jurisdiction of *any* in Matters of Religion,

* Matt. xxiii. 8, 9.

Religion, but to remember, that *ONE, one only* is our Master and Law-giver, even CHRIST; and all Christians are Brethren; i. e. stand upon an equal foot, having no Dominion over one another. Tho' the Princes of the Gentiles exercise Dominion over them, and they who are Great exercise Authority upon them, yet it shall not, our LORD says, be so amongst you †. Nay, but your Church replies, in this its XXth Article, it shall be so amongst us.—There are some who have Authority over others in Matters of Faith.—There are other Masters besides CHRIST.—Thus the Article and the Scripture manifestly clash: Will you be so good, Sir, as to adjust the Controversy betwixt them, and tell me which I am to follow.

The Church is CHRIST's Kingdom: a Kingdom not of this World: For his voluntary Humiliation and suffering of Death, he is advanced to the high Honour of being sole Law-giver, Judge and Sovereign in religious Matters.—He only hath Authority to fix the Terms of Communion for his Followers or Church; and the Terms which He hath fix'd, no Man upon Earth, nor Body of Men, have Authority to set aside, to alter, or new make. And if any Men upon Earth shall presume to alter, or new make, Terms of Communion in his Church, they are guilty of great Arrogance, and invade his Authority and Throne. But this, we apprehend, is what you have done. You

† Matt. xx. 25.

You will not now receive a Person to publick Baptism or the Lord's-Supper upon *the Terms* on which CHRIST and *his Apostles* would have received him. Neither CHRIST nor *his Apostles* ever made the *Sign of the Cross*, or other *Sponsors* besides the Parents, necessary to a Child's Baptism; nor did they ever make *kneeling* a necessary Term of receiving the Sacramental-Supper; but both those *you* make necessary †. Thus you have taken upon you to *new model* the Church of CHRIST, to change and set aside *his* Laws, and to make *others* in their room.

Now give me leave to ask you, Sir, by what Authority do you presume to reject those from *your* Church, whom in your Conscience you believe CHRIST and *his Apostles* would have received into theirs? Are *you* wiser than *they*? Or is *your* Church better framed, and more perfect than *theirs*? If an honest and sincere Christian now brings his Child to you to be publickly baptized, desiring it may be done *without* the Sign of the Cross, and that *himself* may stand forth as *Surety* for its Education; would you not *refuse* him? Or if he desired to be admitted to the Communion of Christians, in the other Sacrament of the Supper, but that he might not take it *Kneeling*: Would you
C not

† The XXVIIth *Canon* requires, the Minister never wittingly to administer the Communion to any, but to such as kneel. The XXIXth *Canon* requires, that no Parent shall be urged to be present at his Child's Baptism; nor be admitted to answer as Godfather for his own Child.

not *reject* him? But if the same Person had come to JESUS CHRIST or the *Apostles*, offering himself and Child upon the *same Terms*, would they not have *received* him? But how is it, Sir, that you take upon you to *reject* from CHRIST's Family and Church, those whom you believe HIMSELF would have *received*? Is not this *Lording it over* GOD's Heritage, and usurping CHRIST's Throne? Is it not setting yourselves up for *Law-Makers* and *Rulers* in his Kingdom; claiming Homage from *his* Subjects? And are not his *faithful* Subjects, by the Allegiance they owe HIM, obliged to enter their Protest against such Usurpation, and to *stand fast in the Liberty wherewith CHRIST has set them free*?

Where then, let me appeal to your own sober Judgment, does the *Guilt of Schism* lie: Upon *you* or upon *us*? Upon *us*, who offer our selves to *Communion* in your Church upon the *Terms* which CHRIST appointed, and are ready to do *every Thing* which CHRIST has commanded: Or upon *you*, who absolutely *reject* *us*, unless, besides what CHRIST hath order'd, we will submit also to some Orders and Devices of *your own*? We come as the *Lord's Servants*, and desire to eat at the *Lord's-Table*, with reverent Submission to all *his* Appointments. Nay but, say you, you shall not come to the *Lord's-Table*, unless you will *kneel*; *i. e.* unless you will come in that Posture, which tho' CHRIST in *his* Wisdom did not think proper, yet which we in *our* Wisdom have thought

thought proper *to ordain*. In other Words; unless besides being CHRIST'S *Servants*, you will also be *ours*; and pay Subjection to *our* Institution and Authority in this religious Rite,

This, Sir, is the true State of the Controversy betwixt us: Judge now, I pray you, with the Impartiality of a *Christian*, who makes the *Schism*, and who has reason to fear being brought into *Judgment*, by the great *Law-giver* of the Church, for the unhappy Breach which subsists.—Let a *great Prelate* who at present adorns one of the highest Stations of *your Church* be heard as *Judge* betwixt us.—“ In
 “ all other Societies, the *express* Will of the
 “ *Founder*, and the Terms of Fellowship and
 “ Communion which *he* has laid down, are
 “ accounted *sacred*. In all other Kingdoms
 “ the *Will* of the *supreme Power* is a *Law*.
 “ No one pretends, or dares pretend, to make
 “ Laws of equal Force with his. How hard
 “ then is the Fate of the *Christian Church*, or
 “ of the *Kingdom of CHRIST*, when *his* Will
 “ is declared *insufficient*, and the *invented*
 “ *Words* and *Decisions* of his Subjects are made
 “ co-ordinate with his own, equally exclusive
 “ of others of his Subjects from the *Communion*
 “ of their Fellow-Subjects! And how
 “ hard is the Fate of those *Believers* in *him*,
 “ who *desire Communion upon the Terms* GOD
 “ *has prescribed*, to be excluded by the Words
 “ of Men; by the *Inventions* of Men, imposed
 “ upon them for *his Precepts*! And how
 “ unhappy is the *Church*, to be reduced by
 “ any such Methods within *more narrow*

“ Bounds than our LORD himself has confined it*.”

But you are in Readiness to retort, and with great Assurance tell me, “ That the *Avoidance* of Kneeling insisted upon by our Ministers, is not less an Imposition than your enjoining it.—That we do really impose the Observance of one particular Gesture upon our Communicants.—That sitting is the regular, unvaried Practice of our Churches; observed as constantly and universally amongst us, as Kneeling is amongst you,—never allowed to be departed from; which our Ministers require, insist upon, and refuse to abate.”—— And you ask me “ if one should present himself to take the Sacrament standing, or offer to take it on his Knees, whether I don’t think he would undergo some severe Expostulations, and be plainly told, we had no such Custom, nor the Churches of God, and it would not be given him at all†.”

I believe the World will be surprized, Sir, and that an *ingenuous Blush* will cover your own Face, when you find that this Account of us is absolutely without Truth, and quite contrary to Fact. I have spent my whole Life amongst the *Dissenters*, and am acquainted with a great Number of their Churches and Ministers; but never once, till now, heard that SITTING at the Lord’s-Table was ever insisted on as a Term of Communion with them; or that

* Bishop of Winchester’s Postscript to his Answer to Dr. Hare’s Sermon, page 254.

† Letter II. pag. 56, 57, 58. Letter III. pag. 8, 9.

that it is their *unvaried* and *universal* Practice. The contrary to this, I know to be Truth. In the Church to which I myself belong, there is a Person who for many Years has constantly received KNEELING, without the least Offence to the Congregation, or any Expostulation from the Minister on that Account. In some of our Churches, I am well informed, there are some who receive *Standing*, some *Kneeling*: In this every one amongst us is left entirely at his Liberty. Tho' the Posture of *Sitting* be generally thought by us most suitable to the *Commemorative-Supper* of our LORD; instituted instead of the *Paschal-Supper* of the *Jews*; and most agreeable to the Practice of CHRIST and *his Apostles*, who, without all peradventure, *Sat* around the Table; yet in this we are all left to follow freely our own Persuasion. Nor is there, I believe, amongst our Ministers one in five hundred, who would refuse to give the Sacrament either *Standing* or *Kneeling* to any one who thought *either of these* the fittest Posture of receiving. Our *Liberty* as to this Matter you might have seen in *Baxter's reform'd Liturgy*; where it is expressly said—"And let
 " none of the People be forced to sit, stand or
 " kneel in the Act of receiving, whose Judgment is against it." And in Dr. Calamy's brief Account, &c. which you appear to have read—
 " The Communicants amongst Protestant Dis-
 " senters, are AT LIBERTY to use THEIR OWN
 " POSTURE in the Time of Receiving; tho' a
 " Table Gesture is most commonly used *."

Thus,

* Letter to a Divine in Germany, pag. 11.

Thus, Sir, I have at large considered your Charge of SCHISM upon *the Dissenters*; and hope by this time you begin to think more favourably of us; and to *justify* our Principles as truly *catholic* and *generous*; the only *Broad-Bottom* on which the Peace of the Church can be solidly fixed; and that *the Guilt* of the Separation lies wholly on *your Church*, which insists upon UNCHRISTIAN and UNSCRIPTURAL *Terms* of communicating with it.

But I hope to finish your Conviction, Sir, and to wipe off every Speck of the Taint of Schism from *Dissenters*, by calling to your Remembrance your own excellent Definition of the *Catholic* or *Christian Church*; and reasoning with you on it. "The *Catholic Church*,
 " you say *, is one outward and visible Society
 " DIVINELY instituted; the most admirable and
 " glorious Society under Heaven."---Mind, Sir, your own Words; and it will soon end the Debate. If it be a Society DIVINELY instituted, then whatever Society is not of Divine, but of *meerly human* Institution, is not the *Church of Christ*. If it be a Society *divinely instituted*, then the *Terms of Admission* into this Society, and the *Qualifications* of its Members are *divinely fixed*, i. e. fixed by the Will and Authority of GOD: Whatever *visible Society* then hath its *Terms of Admission* and the *Qualifications* of its Members NOT *divinely fix'd*, fix'd only by the Will and Authority of Men, cannot

* Letter I. pag. 73.

cannot be the truly *Catholic* and *Christian* Church.

Now here shall I intreat you, Sir, with the Impartiality of a *Christian*; who has nothing but *Truth* and the *Will of God* in view, to stop a Moment and compare the CONSTITUTION of the *Church of England*, and the CONSTITUTION of the *Church of Christ*, and see if they are not Societies of a quite *different Frame*; the one a *human*, the other a *divine* Institution; the one resting entirely on the Authority and Will of *Men*, the other upon the Will and Authority of *G O D*.

If you enquire after the Constitution and Frame of the *Church of Christ*, where must you look for it? only in the *Bible* *. But if you enquire after the Constitution and Frame of the *Church of England*, where must you look for that? in the *Statute-book*, in the *Canons*, and *Common-prayer-book*, and in the *Codes* of the *English-law*.

The Church of CHRIST is a *religious* Establishment, founded upon the *Scriptures*, as the only authentic Rule of its Doctrines and Worship; the Church of ENGLAND is a *civil* Establishment, founded upon *Acts of Parliament*, as the only authentic Rule of what is to be believed and practised therein. The one a *spiritual Structure*, built upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, JESUS CHRIST himself being the chief Corner-stone: The other a *political Structure*, built upon the Foundation of the

* The Bible only is the Religion of Protestants. *Chillingworth*.

the Lords and Commons of the Realm, THE KING, as supreme Head, being the chief Corner-stone.

Into the *Church of Christ* any Person may be admitted, who submits to the *Terms* appointed by *Christ*: But, into the *Church of England*, he cannot be admitted, except over and above *these*, he submits also to *Terms* which *human Authority* hath instituted and devised.

In *Christ's Church* the Lord's-supper is appointed and used ONLY for *spiritual* and *religious* Ends; but, in the *Church of England*, it is notoriously both instituted and used for *political* and *worldly* Ends, to qualify for a Post. In the *former* 'twas appointed with Intention, and as a *Mean* of uniting all Christians; and of destroying all Variance and Distinctions betwixt them. In the *latter* 'tis appointed with Intention, and as a *Mean*, of *discriminating* and *dividing* Christians; and of making a *Distinction* betwixt one and another.

In the *Christian Church*, no openly debauched or scandalously wicked Person has a *Right* to come to the Table of the Lord, or to partake of its Provisions; but in the *Church of England*, if such a Person has a Commission from the King in the Army or the Fleet, or any profitable Post, this gives him a *Right* to come to the Communion-Table, a *Right* to demand the holy Elements at the *Priest's Hands*, as a *Qualification* for his Post.

In the *scriptural Church* of Christ, there are no such Officers ever heard of as *Archbishops*,
Deans,

Deans, Archdeacons, Prebendaries, Canons, Chancellors, &c. — But there is *another Church*, you know, Sir, where *these* are Officers of great Influence, of high Importance and Rank. But whence came this pompous Train! From the *apostolic Fountain at Jerusalem*, or from the *corrupted Source at Rome*?

The *Church of Christ* never excommunicates, nor pretends to exercise its Discipline upon any but its own Members; *For what have I to do*, the Apostle says, *to judge them that are without* *? But the *Church of England* extends its ecclesiastical Authority over those who never belonged to it; and by a very extraordinary Act of Power, *excommunicates* such as *never were* of its *Communion*; that is, it casts such *from*, who never were *in* it. In common Life such a Thing would be reckoned *marvellous* indeed. Should I solemnly threaten, yea actually proceed to cast a Person *out* of my House, who never was *in* it, I should work as great a Miracle as was ever wrought in the *Church of Rome*: But Miracles of this kind, Sir, your Church, you know, sometimes works.

Again; the Rod with which the *Church of Christ* chastises its Delinquents is *spiritual*, not *carnal*; but the Rod of the *Church of England* is *carnal*, not *spiritual*. By the Constitution of the *former*, the excommunicated Member is only to be deprived of *spiritual* Privileges, such as Fellowship in Prayer, Singing, Sacraments, &c. As for his civil Property and Rights, it meddles not with these; *for CHRIST's King-*

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dom

dom is not of this World; but by the Constitution of the *latter*, the excommunicated Member is delivered over to the *civil Arm*, to humble and chastise him; he is disabled from asserting his natural Rights, from being a Witness, from bringing Actions at Law, and if he does not submit in *forty Days*, a Writ shall issue forth to *imprison him*.—

In the *Church of Jesus Christ*, those who are entrusted with ecclesiastical Discipline are solemnly *charged before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect Angels*, to be no Respecters of Persons, *to do nothing by Partiality, and not to prefer one before another* *: Neither the *Gold Ring* nor the *gay Cloathing* †, nor pecuniary Gifts, are to have any Influence upon their *ecclesiastical Proceedings*; but the Poor are to receive the same Measure with the Rich. But is it thus, Sir, in the *Church of England*? May not a grievous Sinner, according to her Constitution, be suffered *to commute*? to have Pardon for Money, and to screen himself by a round Fee from the Stroke of the Church's Rod? Yea, when he is going to be delivered, or actually is delivered, into the Hands of *the Devil*, and *Satan* has him in his Keeping, will not an *handsome Sum* presently pluck him thence, and restore him to the Church's soft and indulgent Bosom again?— You remember, Sir, the Heathen Satyrist,

————— *At vos*

Dicite Pontifices, in Sacris quid facit Aurum.

Persius Sat. II.

* 1 Tim. v. 21.

† James ii. 2, 3.

And

And you know what was said, upon a like Occasion, by a much greater than he—*Thy Money perish with thee; because thou hast thought that the Gift of God (Pardon and Absolution) may be purchased with Money, thou hast neither Part nor Lot in this Matter* *.

Some of the most sacred Acts of spiritual Jurisdiction, its solemn *Censures* and *Excommunications*, are exercised in the Church of England by *unconsecrated* and meer *Laymen*. These hold the *Keys*, open or shut, cast out or admit to it, according to their sole Pleasure. The *Chancellors*, *Officials*, *Surrogates*—who administer the Jurisdiction of spiritual Courts, and determine the most important spiritual Matters, such as *delivering Men to the Devil*, &c. frequently are, and by express Provision of Law, *always* may be *Laymen*. And truly, Sir, I greatly pity you Gentlemen of the *Clergy*, that some of the most tremendous and solemn Parts of your *sacred Office*, such as *Excommunications*, *Absolutions*, &c. you are forced to perform, not according to, but sometimes, perhaps, directly against your own Judgments, as you are *authoritatively* directed and commanded by these *Lay-persons*. *Forced*, I say, to do it, notwithstanding what you urge about *your own Concurrence*; for if you refuse to *concur*, you are immediately liable to *Suspension ab officio & beneficio*; and if you continue obstinate, to be *excommunicated* your own selves †,

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* Acts viii. 20, 21.
 † There is one Thing, says Bishop *Burnet*, yet wanting to compleat the Reformation of the Church; which is to restore primitive

The Church of JESUS CHRIST never owed its Support (it scorned to owe its Propagation and Support) to the Powers, Preferments and Riches of this World; 'twas its Glory, that it made its Way, and was established upon Earth, not only without, but in direct Opposition to them: It commands its Ministers not to STRIVE, but to be gentle to all Men; in Meekness, instructing those who gainsay— (2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.) But the Church of England, conscious of its Weakness, props itself on every Side with civil Dignities and Emoluments; calls in the Powers and Riches of this World to its Support and Defence; intrenches itself deep under Shelter of penal Laws, and from thence thunders out its Excommunications, and Threats of Fines, and Imprisonments, upon any who shall dare to write or speak any thing derogatory to its Ceremonies and Forms of Worship, or its Articles of Faith*.

There
five Discipline against scandalous Persons, the establishing the Government of the Church in Ecclesiastical Hands, and taking it out of Lay-Hands, which have so long profaned it; and have exposed the Authority of the Church and the Censures of it, chiefly Excommunication, to the Contempt of the Nation; so that the dreadfulest of all Censures, is now become the most scorned and despised. — *Hist. Reform. Abridg. Pag. 367.*

* The IV, V, VIth Canons solemnly denounce—“ That who-
“ soever shall affirm that the Form of God's Worship contained
“ in the *Common-prayer*, hath any Thing in it repugnant to the
“ Word of God—or that any of the XXXIX Articles are in any
“ Part erroneous; or such as may not with a good Conscience be
“ subscribed, let him be EXCOMMUNICATED *ipso facto*, and
“ not be restored until he repent and publicly revoke his wicked
“ Errors.”

And by the *Act of Uniformity*, it is enacted—“ That if any one
“ shall declare, or speak any Thing in the Derogation or deprav-
“ ing

There is one Difficulty more, Sir, which I have often revolved, but could never possibly get over; it seems to hang as a *dead and insuperable* Weight upon the Frame of your Church; if you can handsomely remove it, you will merit *Lambeth* for a Reward.

The Church of England and the Church of Christ seem to be *two* Societies, absolutely *distinct*, and of a quite *different* Constitution, as they have *two* different HEADS, or FOUNTAINS of Power, whence all Authority, Jurisdiction, and Ministrations in the *two* Churches severally spring. In the Church of Jesus Christ, HIMSELF is *supreme Head*, the only Law-giver and Sovereign: To us there is but ONE Lord *. ONE is your Master, even CHRIST †. Gave him to be HEAD over all Things to the Church ‡. ALL POWER is given to ME, in Heaven and in Earth, go ye therefore teach all Nations ||. CHRIST is the ONLY Fountain of Influence, Jurisdiction, and Power in his Church, by Commission from whom alone all its Officers act.

But in the Church of England, you well know, Sir, the King or Queen is SUPREME HEAD, “vested with all Power to exercise all Manner of Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, and Archbishops, Bishops, Archdeacons, and other Eccle-
“ing of the Book of Common-prayer, he shall, for the first Offence, suffer Imprisonment one whole Year, without Bail or Mainprize; and for the second Offence shall be imprisoned during his Life.”

* 1 Cor. viii. 6.

† Matt. xxiii. 8.

‡ Ephes. i. 22.

|| Matt. xxviii. 18, 19.

“ Ecclesiastical Persons, have *no Manner* of Jurisdiction ecclesiastical, but by and under the KING’s *Majesty*, who hath full Power and Authority to hear and determine *all Manner* of Causes ecclesiastical; and to reform, and correct *all* Vice, Sin, Errors, Heresies, Enormities, Abuses whatsoever, which by *any Manner* of spiritual Authority or Jurisdiction ought, or may be lawfully reformed *.” —

At the first Establishment of this Church under *Hen. VIII.* and *Edw. VI.* all the *Bishops* took out Commissions from *the CROWN*, for the exercising of their *spiritual Jurisdiction* in these Kingdoms, during the *King’s* Pleasure only; and in their Commissions acknowledge all sort of Jurisdiction, as well ecclesiastical as civil, to have flowed originally from the *REGAL Power*, as from a *supreme Head*, and a *Fountain and Spring* of all Magistracy within his own Kingdom †.”

Yea, even the *Power of Ordination* itself, which is reckoned a *Peculiar* of the episcopal Office, the first Reformers and Founders of this Church derived from the *KING*, and exercised only as by Authority from *him*, and during his Pleasure. “ Thus *Cranmer* Archbishop of *Canterbury*, *Bonner* Bishop of *London*, &c. took out Commissions from *the Crown*, importing, that because the Vicegerent (*Cromwel*, a Lay-person) could not personally attend the Charge in all Parts of the “ King-

* 26 Hen. VIII. Cap. i. 37 Hen. VIII. Cap. xvii. 1 Eliz. Cap. i.
† Burnet’s Hist. Reform. Part II. Col. p. 9.

" Kingdom, *the KING* authorises *the Bishop* in
 " his (the *King's*) *Stead*, to ordain, within his
 " *Diocese*, such as he judged worthy of holy
 " Orders; to collate to Benefices; to give In-
 " stitution; and to execute all other Parts of
 " the Episcopal Authority; and this during the
 " *King's Pleasure only**."

In consequence of this SUPREMACY, the
 KING or QUEEN of *this Church* hath Power
 to excommunicate from, or to re-admit into it,
 independent of, yea, in direct Opposition to,
 all its *Bishops* and *Clergy*. The KING or
 QUEEN, revoke, if they please, any spiritual
 Censures of the *Bishops* or *Archbishops*; yea,
 can suspend, deprive, or even excommunicate,
 themselves; or can, by their Proclamation only,
 without the least Confession, Humiliation, or
 Satisfaction for their Offence, pardon and re-
 store *excommunicated Persons*, the vilest Of-
 fenders, to the Church's Bosom again†.

Yea, further; they have Power to forbid all
 Preaching for a Time; as did K. *Hen. VIII.*
 K. *Edw. VI.* Q. *Mary*, Q. *Eliz.*----to limit,
 instruct, and prescribe to *the Clergy* what they
 shall, and what they shall not preach; as did
 Q. *Eliz.* K. *James I.* K. *Charles I.* K. *William*,
 &c.---Finally, to the *King* or *Queen* ONLY does
 it pertain to declare *what is HERESY*, and au-
 thoritatively to pronounce what *Doctrines* and
Tenets

* *Vid.* Examination of the *Codex Juris*, &c. Pag. 32, 33.

† A *Parson* was deprived for Adultery; afterward a general
 Pardon came, which pardoned the Adultery. It was adjudged
 that the *Parson* was *ipso facto*, restored to his Benefice. *Coke*
 6 Rep. 13.

Tenets are, and what are not, to be censured as such: Nor have all the *Bishops* and *Clergy*, assembled in Convocation, the least Authority to censure any Tenet as *heretical*, if the PRINCE on the Throne refuse his Consent.

Now here, Sir, I am pressed with an *insuperable Difficulty* how to reconcile this Constitution of the *Church of England* with the Constitution of the *Church of Christ*. Are they not most indisputably *two different Societies*, subject to *two different*, sometimes *opposite*, Authorities, animated and governed by *two different Heads*? In CHRIST'S *Church*, HIMSELF is the *only Sovereign and Head*; HE only hath Power to decree Ceremonies and Rites, to fix Terms of Communion and Authority in Points of Faith: Nor hath any *earthly Prince* Power to make Laws in *his Kingdom*, which shall bind the Consciences of *his Subjects*; or sovereignly to dictate to *his Servants and Ministers* what they shall believe, and what they shall preach. Yea, *his Subjects* are expressly commanded and charged to receive nothing as *Doctrine or Parts of Religion*, which are only *Commandments of Men**.

But in the *Church of England* there is ANOTHER *Sovereign, Law-giver, SUPREME HEAD* besides JESUS CHRIST; an *Authority* which commands Things which CHRIST never commanded, which teaches Doctrines HE never taught, which enjoins Terms of Communion, and Rites of religious Worship, which

CHRIST

* Matt. xv. 9.

CHRIST never enjoined.---What now can I judge, Sir! What do you yourself judge! but that the *two Churches* are two distinct and quite different Societies (for in *one* and *the same* Society, surely there cannot be *two Supreme Heads*) that they are framed after different Models, consist of different Members, are governed by different Officers, Statutes, and Laws.—Consequently, my SEPARATION or DISSENT from *the one*, does, by no Means infer my SEPARATION from *the other*. Yea, what am I to judge but that by the Allegiance I owe to CHRIST my ONLY *supreme Head* and *King* in spiritual Matters, I am *obliged* to enter my Protest against the Pretensions and Claims of any OTHER *supreme Head*. For, can a Man *serve two Masters*? Can he be subject at the same Time to *two supreme Heads*? Can he be faithful to CHRIST, the *only KING* in the Church, and yet acknowledge ANOTHER *King*, as a Fountain of all Magistracy and Power therein? Surely he cannot.

Permit me, good Sir, to exercise your Patience a Moment or two more upon this remarkable *Contrast*, and I will dismiss the ungrateful Subject.

By the Constitution of the *Church of Christ*, 'tis expressly ordered and declared—That the WOMAN *shall not be suffered publickly to teach, nor to usurp Authority over the Man* *. But by the Constitution of the *Church of England*, the WOMAN is permitted *publickly to teach*, yea,

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to

to limit and controul in *spiritual* and *religious* Matters, and authoritatively to INSTRUCT all the *Bishops*, and *Clergy*, and *Men* in the Land. Thus did Queen *Elizabeth*, thus did Queen *Anne*, and thus hath every Queen Authority to do that sits upon our Throne; Authority to *prescribe* and *dictate* to all, both Ministers and People, what the one are to preach, and the other to receive. And was it not, Sir, a very comely and edifying Sight, to behold the two Houses of Convocation waiting upon the good Queen (*Anne* *) in the Case of *Whiston's* Books upon the Trinity, to be *instructed* by her Majesty, whether they were to be condemned as *heretical*, or not? That venerable and learned Body had solemnly decreed them to be *dangerous* and *heretical*; but this their *Censure* was of no Force, till they had laid it before *the Queen*, to have *her* Judgment upon the Point. Upon her Majesty's Determination it *entirely* depended, whether *Whiston's* Tenets were to be *rejected* by the *Church of England* as erroneous, or not. Her Majesty, in this Case, was of a *different* Opinion from her two Houses of Convocation; she thought not fit to censure the Books: So her *single* Opinion, strange to relate! her *single* Opinion carries it against that of *her Bishops* and *Clergy*. She over-rules and sets aside all their Proceedings, *restrains* and *counteracts* them in one of the very chief of their *pastoral* Functions, the guarding against Errors and Heresies in the Church.

Behold

Behold here, Sir, A WOMAN exercising spiritual ecclesiastical Authority over *the Man*! Yea, behold *the Representative* of the Clergy of the whole Land, a most learned, grave and venerable Body, waiting upon A WOMAN, to learn from her Mouth, what *the Church* is to believe, and what to reject, as to this great *Mystery of Faith*: Upon A WOMAN who could be supposed to know as little of this Matter as of the Motion of the Stars; yet, by her *sole Determination*, (I repeat it with Astonishment, and you hear it, no doubt, with Perplexity and Grief) *your Church* was uncontrollably and authoritatively directed in this deep and mysterious Point.

I ask you, Sir, in the *Name of God*, Is *this* the Constitution and Frame of the *Church of CHRIST*? Is it not *a Constitution* of a quite different Nature; a Society not DIVINELY, but *humanly* instituted; and, therefore, by your own Definition, NOT the *Church of Christ*? And may not, think you, a Person separate peaceably from it, without any the least Danger of thereby separating himself from the one scriptural, apostolic, and catholic Church?

When you stript the *Pope* of his SUPREMACY, and gave it to our *Princes*, you should have taken Care not to have left his INFALLIBILITY behind. An *infallible Head* and Director of *the Church*, be it *Woman* or *Man*, be it an *He* or a *She-bishop*, is a Thing plausible enough, and carries a good Face: But, to lodge the absolute Direction of the *Consciences*, the *Faith*

and the *Discipline* of the Church with a *fallible Head!* to give a *Prince*, yea a *LADY* bred up in all the Softnesses and Diversions of a Court, an uncontrollable Dominion over the religious Conduct both of Clergy and Laity, authoritatively to direct what *those* are to preach, and what *these* to believe as the *Doctrine* of CHRIST! to make HER the *sole Judge* in all Controversies which shall arise upon any the most mysterious and inexplicable Points; so that *all the Priests* are to *ask Knowledge* at HER *Lips*; and whatever SHE determines is to be received by the Church as *Christian Verity* and *Truth!* This is such a *Constitution* as quite shocks the Understanding, and comes not a whit behind *Transubstantiation* itself. Hence, doubtless, Sir, the Triumphs of *Popish Priests* over you! Hence their Inroads upon you, and the thousands they are continually carrying captive from your Tents! And hence the sad Increase, and the Insults of *Deists*, who taking the Scheme of the *Church of England* to be that of the *Christian Church*, are authorised by common Sense, they think, not only to reject, but to treat it with Contempt!

And now, Sir, having so largely discussed this Point, I presume you are convinced, "*That this same peaceable Separation of ours is not, what you call it, a Piece of arrant Nonsense and Contradiction;*" and that you will cease to be so displeased at our treating your grave Lectures upon the heinous Sin of SCHISM, as *solemn Cant*, and *Ecclesiastical Scare-crows*. You see,

see, likewise, how extremely unapt, and quite wide of the Point, are the *two Instances* you bring to illustrate our Case, *viz.* “ of a Wife
 “ separating from the Bed and Board of her
 “ Husband --- Or of two or three Counties
 “ disliking a monarchical Government, and
 “ throwing off their Allegiance to the King *”.
 Has the *Church of England*, Sir, any such Power or Authority over *us Dissenters*, as the Husband has over the Wife? Pray who gave it that Authority? Have we ever plighted it our Troth? or bound ourselves by a solemn Vow to honour and obey it to the End of our Life? --- Or have we ever sworn Allegiance to it; or do we owe it any Homage; as *the Counties* have sworn and do owe to *the King*?

Amongst the *peculiar* Excellencies of *your Church* you reckon “ The Use of the *three Creeds* in publick Worship; as one of the
 “ most effectual and powerful Means both for
 “ teaching and preserving the Christian Faith entire and uncorrupt, which we have not in our
 “ Churches †.” The *Creed* called *the Apostles*, we have in constant use amongst us: And as for the *two other*, especially the *Athanasian*, we are content you should have the Honour of its being *peculiar* to yourselves. But methinks, Sir, it should a little check your Triumph over us here, to remember, that some of the wisest and most illustrious Members of your Church, both Clergy and Laity, account the Use of *this Creed* your great Sin and Reproach, and with A. B. Tillotson, wish you were well rid of it.

What

* Lett. I. Page 72.

† Lett. I. Pag 65

What are you, Sir, amongst the *weak and uncharitable* Minds who *damn to the Pit of Hell* all who cannot receive all the dark and *mysterious Points* set forth in that Creed! Do you in your Conscience think that there is NO SALVATION for those who do not faithfully believe the several Articles it contains; and that *whosoever doth not keep whole and undefiled the Faith therein deliver'd, he shall WITHOUT DOUBT perish everlastingly*? What! the many great and worthy Persons, bright Ornaments of your own Church, who instead of *keeping it whole and undefiled*, have openly disavow'd, preach'd and wrote against it, dying in this Disbelief, have they *without peradventure everlastingly perish'd*? Alas! for the good Doctors *Clarke, Whitby, Burnet, &c.* — For the illustrious Sir *Isaac, &c. &c.* Yea, alas! for the whole *Greek-Church* who have strenuously rejected the Article of the *Filioq;* — They are gone down, it seems, to the *infernal Pit*! And notwithstanding their great Knowledge and Piety in this World, are, for not believing the *Athanasian Creed*, sunk into EVERLASTING DARKNESS and DAMNATION in the other! Do you wonder *Deism* prevails, if this be genuine *Christianity*?

'Tis a Fact, I presume, indisputable, that a great Part of the most learned and virtuous of your Clergy are departed from the *Athanasian Doctrine*; and that those of them who are not, do by no means think its Belief *absolutely and indispensably* necessary to Salvation. What

now

now must a *Deist* think, when he hears both the one and the other *thirteen* Times a Year, most solemnly declaring in the Presence of *Almighty God*, and as *Instructors* of his People, that *whoever will be saved, it is before all Things necessary that he hold the ATHANASIAN Faith*; and most *peremptorily* denouncing EVERLASTING DAMNATION upon those who do not believe it; that is, many of them denouncing DAMNATION upon *themselves*! --- Is this your "powerful and effectual Means of preserving the Christian Faith?" --- I should think it one of the *most effectual* to subvert and destroy it. It has no doubt, been in fact a great stumbling-block in the Way of *Infidels and Jews*, and harden'd them in their Opposition to the Religion of CHRIST, when they see it dooming to *undoubted and everlasting* Perdition all who do not heartily and sincerely believe (for that must be meant by *faithfully*) these deep and mysterious Points, which we acknowledge to be inexplicable, and far above the Powers of Reason to comprehend.

"But the Dissenting Ministers, you tell me, who have complied with the Terms of the Toleration, have solemnly subscribed the VIIIth Article which approves the *Athanasian Creed* *." Let Dr. *Calamy* answer †. The dissenting Ministers about the City, in a Body, gave in their Sense of the Articles when they subscribed them, and among the rest of this VIIIth Article, in the Gloss

"upon

* Appendix, Page 78.

† Life of Mr. Baxter, Page 236.

"upon which, the *damnatory Clauses* of this
 "Cred are expressly *excluded* the Subscrip-
 "tion. — And there was something of the same
 "Nature done in several Parts of the Country.
 Now the Fathers and Predecessors of the pre-
 sent dissenting Ministers having made this *pub-
 lic* Protest and Declaration at their Subscrip-
 tion, and the *Legislature* having accepted, or at
 least, not rejected it; under the Favour of this
Protest their Successors may be supposed now
 to subscribe with the *same Disapprobation* of
 the *damnatory Clause*. If it were not to be
 thus taken, there is, I hope, not a Minister
 among us but would publicly disown and re-
 nounce his Subscription. *What he should say*

I should now proceed, Sir, to the Exami-
 nation of other Parts of your Letters, to shew
 the great *Insufficiency* of your Arguments and
 Objections; and to observe that, in many In-
 stances, you have extremely mistaken and given
 quite, wrong Representations of our religious
 Principles and Practice. — But I relieve your
 Patience at present. — If this Province be un-
 dertaken by no other Hand, you may in some
 Time, by divine Permission, expect to hear
 farther from,

Sir,

Your very humble Servant,

A DISSENTER.

